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### **Finding Solutions to the Relay Judging Platforms Controversy, Instead of Simply Reacting**

The recent controversy surrounding the accuracy and dependability of Relay Judging Platforms is prompting many to take a knee jerk reaction to the problem. The sport has gone through many advancements and we arguably don't want to take one step forward and two steps back as discussions proceed about this issue. In the past, people argued that touchpads could not be trusted when they were first being used, however does anyone want to go back to not using them and opting instead to have humans judging finish place pick across the board?

The current argument is that RJP manufacturers claim that their RJPs are perfect and infallible even though they have failed at times. Just like with any technology no machine is immune to malfunctions. RJPs are no different and Colorado Time Systems or any other manufacturer would never claim that their touchpad or RJP, will never make a mistake. That's why we use buttons and watches at almost all meets, to insure accuracy. Though some want to eliminate RJPs from the sport because of the rare instances that they fail, not considering how this would dramatically impair accuracy and more importantly fairness.

Technology is vital to the sport to not only guarantee accuracy but to guarantee objectivity. If a machine makes a mistake it's NOT because it knows "who" was in that lane, it's completely random, void of bias. When humans make a mistake, there's no guarantee it was random and void of bias. Humans do know who is in the lanes. Machines are not infallible, but they are also not prejudice. Humans, unfortunately, are not immune to prejudices and bias. Before rash decisions are made discussions need to occur with people on the front line of officiating and coaching. We agree, we need some human intervention to make sure things are fair, but the machines can do the job better than humans.

We understand that fail safe systems need to be implemented and that's why an employee of Colorado Time Systems told the NCAA that they should use a minimum of a semi-high speed video camera to provide backup for the RJPs. A number of the major USA Swimming meets and NCAA meets are using relay judging and some are also currently using video cameras with a speed of about 100 frames per second.

However, the downside to using only video is that it takes a great deal of time to review all of the relay exchanges in a single lane, let alone all lanes of many heats of each relay. The rule from the NCAA RULE book: Electronic Equipment Video Review ARTICLE 7. Video replay may be used at competitions governed by a meet or games committee composed of representatives of multiple institutions to determine if the electronic judging equipment has failed. Such equipment can be used if the relay judging equipment detects an exchange from +0.09 to -0.09, both relay judges independently recorded opposite of the equipment and the referee feels it is warranted to investigate the accuracy of the electronic judging equipment. To use such equipment, the meet committee (in consultation with the meet referee) must set up a system before the event aligned with a direct side view(s) of the exchange end and maintain a speed of at least 25 frames/second. Video of this speed allows for two frames in each direction of what should have been 0.0, allowing for sufficient evidence to be indisputable and clear.

Exact framing is not necessary, nor is time synching with the electronic timing system. The result of the video is merely to determine if the electronic judging equipment has failed. The video shall not be used to detect early takeoffs or any other rule infractions. If conclusive video evidence exists that the electronic equipment failed, the result of the electronic judging equipment is voided, no electronic result is recorded and the referee may overturn the disqualification for that heat. Any obstruction to the

view of the exchange is sufficient to void the video from evidence. The video clip must be saved and submitted to the NCAA or conference, along with a statement from the referee detailing the reason for the overturned call, for archiving and review; and the equipment must then be tested to determine if the equipment is in fact faulty or if some other glitch occurred. Should the NCAA or conference disagree with the video evidence, the NCAA or conference retains the right to overturn the meet referee's decision.

Some have even proposed using only high speed video, in place of RJPs and there's a clear economic issue with that solution. At a time when the sport is trying to encourage growth and expansion, this solution would place an economic strain on many smaller venues or budget crunched venues that would find it next to impossible to buy costly high speed cameras. As a result of this they would simply opt for solely using humans and again that option is riddled with problems.

Colorado Time Systems agrees that fail safe systems need to be implemented in those rare cases that technology malfunctions. However, to completely eliminate RJPs would be hindering the advancement of the sport and opening the door to even more controversy if humans took over.

Based in Loveland, Colorado, Colorado Time Systems has established a reputation for precision and innovation in swim timing equipment. Since 1972, premier aquatic facilities have chosen Colorado Time Systems for platinum quality timing, scoring, and display systems.